

all as I wished to be treated by them. Some of the balls had next to no training and looked as if they had lived all their lives in very uncleanly quarters. They seemed to feel a little out of place in there with so many fine, well-bred balls.

Finally we reached Para. I felt really sorry when I had to take my leave of the friends I had made on the way down, none of whom I shall ever see again, probably. I must say I didn't like the cruel, heartless way they have of getting the balls out of the ship's hold. Every man has a sharp hook, which he whacks into the side of a ball and tosses it up on deck. If one man is not able to handle the particular ball, then two get their hooks in the ball, and up it goes. Fortunately, my size saved me from a like treatment. Bigness is not such a very bad thing after all, at times, anyway. It saves you many a hard knock.

"If all I hear about this city is true, it is a very cruel place. I hear they have what may be called rubber slaughter houses, where men, with big knives, butcher and cut into small pieces every one of the balls that come to this city. Then they pack them in boxes of 250 and 500 pounds and ship them off to other lands. Here, again, I believe my size is going to save me from such a cruel fate, for the present, anyway. So far I have been well treated. I could not desire better. I hear the papers have announced my arrival and given a short sketch of my life. A great many people have come to see me, and I try to behave as a well-bred rubber ball should. They all go away saying that they never saw the like before. I naturally feel proud of the fact that I am the largest ball that has ever come to this city of rubber balls. More rubber is shipped from this city than from any other in the world. More than this, the finest rubber in the world comes from my home forests. If I may not appear too vain, I will tell you a secret: I am of the finest rubber known and command the top prices. My bigness is going to bring me further good things. I am to go on a trip of exhibition. I shall remain here a short time, then I am to be taken to New York, where I shall remain for a while; then I shall go across to London, and then the largest city in the world will have the biggest rubber ball in the world. Who can tell whether I may not also cross over the channel and tour the continent? There is no use denying it, I shall feel more important than I really am when all those people come to see me and wonder at my size.

"I see you are growing tired of my long story, so I must be bringing it to a close. Whenever you meet up with any of the Rubber family please remember my story. I failed to mention the fact that many who go to the forests to get us never come back. They will remain there until the last trumpet sounds. Thousands of lives are sacrificed for us. Every member of the Rubber family has a long history behind him.

"Good-bye, boys; I hope we may meet some day.

"Your true friend,
"The 'Wee' Rubber Ball."

STRANGE BAROMETERS.

It was to be a great military parade, and Harold had been promised to go. Officers and soldiers galore and one real live general were to be there; and now, the very morning it was to come off the weather never looked more threatening. Great clouds in the west were hurrying "to catch hold of hands"—Uncle Tom's way of expressing it—and, if it rained, 'twould spoil all the fun.

Many times before breakfast Harold went to the door and peeped out, a serious look on his troubled face that almost amounted to what grandma often called "a having-given-it-up" expression. "Do you think, grandpa, 'twill rain?" he asked, going to the shed where his Grandfather Nicholas was grinding the ax.

"I hardly think it. Suppose we go to the barn and see what the barometers say."

"The barometers?" exclaimed Harold, wonderingly. "In the barn—no barometers are there."

"No? Suppose we see." And his grandfather, with a mysterious look, laid down his partly ground ax and started for the barn.

"Are they new?" questioned Harold, doubtfully.

"Not especially. Some of them have been hatched over two years."

"Hatched—barometers?"

"Yes, indeed—every one of them. How else could we obtain our hens?"

"Hens?"

"Certainly. Now, let's see. Here they are; and not one of them oiling herself. No, no rain today. You'll see the parade right enough; all the barometers say so."

"I don't see how you can tell from the hens." And Harold looked incredulously at the flock before him.

"They're not oiling themselves," explained grandpa. "Haven't you seen hens rub their bills over their feathers sometimes? Each one has an oil-sac, and when it is about to rain, they take oil on their bills from their sacs and rub it over the feathers so they'll shed water. You see, that is why I call them my barometers."

"But do their weather predictions always come true, grandpa?" For Harold was still doubtful.

"Not always; but I'd give more for what my feathered barometers tell me than for many a new-tangled weather-indicator that you buy."

"I guess, grandpa, the hens are weather prophets this morning. See, the sun is coming out."

"And so will the parade—see if it doesn't," laughed grandpa, gayly.

And it did. And, strangely as it may seem, Harold's thoughts all that afternoon were divided between the columns of marching soldiers and the strange hen barometers at home.—Sunday School Times.



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LOST HIS FAITH IN GOD.

A small boy, new to the Sunday-school, was greatly pleased with his picture card and its text, "Have faith in God." On the homeward way, however, the precious possession slipped from his fingers and fluttered from the open street cars and immediately a cry of distress arose. "Oh, I've lost my 'Faith in God!' Stop the car! Please stop the car!" The good-natured conductor signaled, and the card was regained amid the smiles of the passengers. One of them said something about the "blessed innocence of childhood," but a more thoughtful voice answered, "There would be many truer and happier lives if only we older ones were wise enough to call a halt when we find ourselves rushing ahead on some road where we are in danger of leaving our faith in God behind us."

A PRAYER IN THE DARK.

A young boy was in bed with his brother when he heard his father's voice. It was late at night and the two boys listened to hear whom he could be talking to at midnight. Presently they perceived that he was praying.

From small things great things grow. For a small boy to hear a voice in the dark was a small thing; but the life which he later gave to China as a result of that overheard prayer was a great thing. If we could see the inner story of any life we should doubtless find that it was shaped by some apparently trivial thing. A sentence began the transformation of John B. Gough. With other men it has been the stroke of a bell, the crow of a cock, the random picking up of a book.

The father did not know that he was doing anything for the boy. He had no thought of influencing him. What he was doing he was doing unconsciously. So Peter did not invite John into the tomb, but he went in himself. "Then entered in therefore the other disciple also." What we do in the daylight is seen by others and molds them, but even in the midnight, ears may hear or eyes see, and a life be shaped by what we are in the dark.—New Guide.

We know not what evils we have been preserved from, for dazzling prospects do not always bring the cheer and comfort we expect, and promise of future good often results in disappointment and sorrow. There are blessings and privileges in every life; let us be thankful for all those which fall to our lot.—Selected.